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ABSTRACT

This document reports the results of a library use study conducted at Frazar Memorial Library (Louisiana) in 1983 as a follow-up study to a 1976-77 library use study. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the extent to which patrons used and were satisfied with library services, to identify areas for improvement, and to gather data for university self-study use. In addition to evaluating the findings of the 1983 survey, the results of the two surveys are compared. In the 1983 survey, 899 questionnaires were distributed randomly to every 10th person entering the library during regular business hours for one week. Of the surveys distributed, 643 (71.5%) provided useable responses. Statistics and commentary are provided for each of the survey's seven question headings: (1) users by status; (2) users by college; (3) reasons for visiting the library; (4) success in locating specific publications; (5) adequacy of staff; (6) evaluation of staff; and (7) suggestions for improvement. A copy of the survey instrument is included. (THC)

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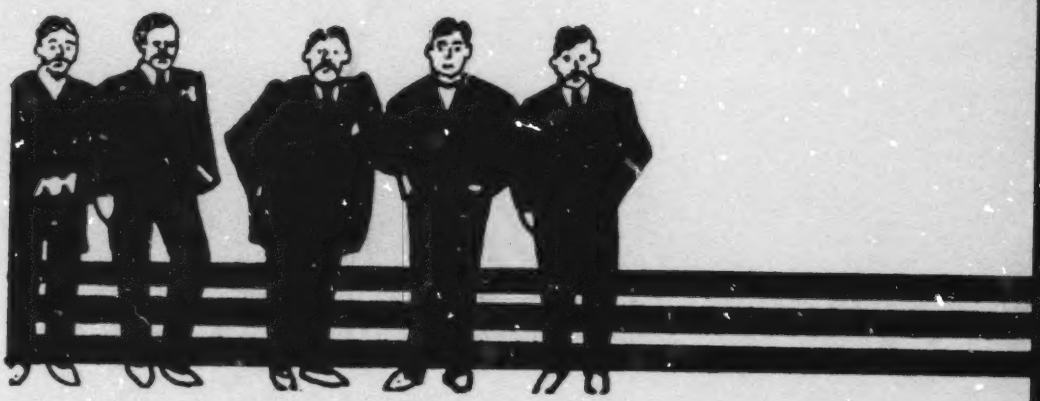

Library Use

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PURPOSE

From November 5-11, 1983, Frazar Memorial Library conducted a follow-up study to the 1976/77 library use survey. The purposes of this investigation were to determine the extent to which patrons used and were satisfied with library services, to identify areas for improvement, and to gather data for university self-study use. In addition to evaluating the findings of the latest survey, a comparison of the results of the two surveys will be examined in this report. All survey materials used in compiling this report are available at the circulation desk.

METHODOLOGY

As in the 1976/77 survey, a random sampling was obtained by distributing the questionnaire to every tenth person entering the library. Library personnel were not included in the sampling. The distribution point was located near the turnstile entrance. Library staff members and student assistants participated in distributing the forms and briefly explaining the purpose of the survey to each questionnaire recipient. Questionnaire distribution was implemented during regular library hours for one week. Because library hours had been extended since the previous survey, distribution time increased one hour daily. The only other major difference was that the 1976/77 survey was conducted three times during the academic year with findings grouped together to form one set of results.

FINDINGS

In the 1983 survey, 899 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 256 or 28.5 percent were not returned or were returned blank, leaving 643 usable responses. The percentage of responses was 71.5. There were 117 refusals to accept questionnaires at the turnstile distribution point. The comparative figures on distribution and responses for this and the 1976/77 study are given below:

	1983	1976/77
Questionnaires distributed	899	1411
Number not responding	256	249
Percentage not responding	(28.5%)	(17.6%)
Usable responses	643	1162
Percentage of responses	(71.5%)	(82.4%)
Refusals	117	78

QUESTION 1: USERS BY STATUS

In question number one each respondent was asked to indicate his/her status. These responses compared with those of the previous study are presented below:

Status	1983		1976/77	
Freshmen	166	(25.8%)	304	(26.2%)
Sophomores	147	(22.9%)	224	(19.3%)
Juniors	130	(20.2%)	225	(19.4%)
Seniors	107	(16.6%)	255	(21.9%)
Graduate students	46	(7.2%)	103	(8.9%)
Faculty	18	(2.8%)	23	(2.0%)
Staff	1	(0.2%)	1	-----
Other	27	(4.2%)	25	(2.2%)
No status given	1	(0.2%)	2	(0.1%)

The figures for users in 1983 become more meaningful when the percentage of users by status is compared to the percentage of enrollment. In the fall of 1983, freshmen constituted 37 percent of the University's enrollment, sophomores 17 percent, juniors 13 percent, seniors 13 percent, and graduate students 19 percent.

Indications are that the greatest number of "other" users were high school students.

QUESTION 2: USERS BY COLLEGE

In order to determine which colleges were making greatest use of the library and the collection, each respondent was asked to indicate his/her major field. This information appears below:

COLLEGE	1983	1976/77

Business	138	(21.5%)	210	(18.0%)
Science	130	(20.2%)	336	(28.9%)
Education	88	(13.7%)	307	(26.4%)
Engineering	77	(12.0%)	101	(8.7%)
Liberal Arts	68	(10.6%)	161	(13.9%)*
Nursing	41	(6.4%)	n/a	n/a
Graduate School	34	(5.3%)	n/a	n/a
No Field Given	39	(6.1%)	28	(2.4%)
Other	28	(4.4%)	19	(1.6%)

* Represents the combined figures for the School of Fine Arts and the School of Humanities.

In evaluating the table of users by college, one must consider two significant changes which have occurred since the 1976/77 study. The College of Humanities and the College of the Arts have been combined to form the College of Liberal Arts. In addition, the University now has a separate College of Nursing, previously a part of the College of Sciences.

QUESTION 3: REASONS FOR COMING TO THE LIBRARY

In analyzing the reasons for coming to the library, the percentages given are calculated by dividing the number of responses in a given category by the total number of usable questionnaires. These figures, when totaled, will be greater than 100 percent since the respondents were asked to check all answers which were applicable.

	1983	1976/77
To return, check out or renew books	107 (16.6%)	230 (19.8%)
Use material reserved by faculty	49 (7.6%)	42 (3.6%)
Assigned reading	74 (11.5%)	168 (14.5%)
Material for a paper, report, thesis	227 (35.3%)	472 (40.6%)
Research for a proposed publication	37 (5.8%)	41 (3.5%)
General reading	162 (25.2%)	383 (33.0%)
To study own books	316 (49.1%)	567 (48.8%)
To use typing facilities	15 (2.3%)	15 (1.3%)
To use listening booths	16 (2.5%)	9 (.8%)
Other reasons	132 (20.5%)	145 (12.5%)
No response	5 (.8%)	2 (.1%)

Other respondents gave reasons for coming to the library which did not appear on the questionnaire. The three most frequently given reasons were: (1) to meet or help a friend, classmate, or teacher; (2) to use the copy machines; and (3) to use the computer terminals.

Reasons given in the 1976/77 study were: (1) to use the copy machines, (2) to see a film in the multi-purpose room, and (3) to help or meet a friend.

Cross tabulations of the reasons for coming to the library by status and by college are available at the circulation desk.

QUESTION 4: SUCCESS IN LOCATING SPECIFIC PUBLICATIONS

In the 1976/77 survey, 649 people were seeking a specific publication. Of this number, 484 said "yes" they were able to locate it; 165 said "no" they were unable to locate it. This represents a success rate of 74.6 percent. Of the 25.4 percent who were unable to find the publication they were seeking, the majority said that the library did not have the item(s).

In the 1983 survey, 389 respondents answered the same question. Of this number, 281 said they were able to locate the publication while 96 said "no". Twelve people answered the question with both "yes" and "no" responses. They were looking for more than one publication and found some but not others. A response that is both negative and positive will be treated as a negative response. In the final analysis, there were 281 positive and 108 negative responses which represents a success rate of 72.2 percent. This information is summarized below:

	1983		1976/77	
Able to locate publications	281	(72.2%)	484	(74.6%)
Unable to locate publications	108	(27.8%)	165	(25.4%)

Reasons for not being able to locate the specific publications are given below:

In bindery	4	(3.7%)	21	(12.7%)
Missing	18	(16.7%)	26	(15.8%)
Mutilated	2	(1.9%)	7	(4.2%)
Checked out	20	(18.5%)	29	(17.6%)
Library does not have	56	(51.9%)	87	(52.7%)

QUESTION 5: ADEQUACY OF STAFF

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they asked a staff member for assistance. Those who indicated that they had requested assistance were then asked if the assistance was adequate. Not all respondents answered both parts of the question.

In comparing responses relating to staff adequacy, the current survey indicates that more people are now asking for assistance and few are finding it inadequate. This conclusion is derived from the following table:

	1983		1976/77	
Asked for assistance	183	(28.5%)	292	(25.1%)
Was assistance adequate?				
Yes	158	(86.3%)	262	(89.7%)
No	8	(4.4%)	9	(3.1%)

QUESTION 6: EVALUATION OF STAFF

Of the usable questionnaires in the 1976/77 study, 1093 persons completed the statement, "Generally I find the library staff to be ..." This represented a response rate of 94 percent. In the 1983 study, 579 or 90 percent of the 643 questionnaire respondents completed this statement. Since this item was to be answered in prose form, a coding system was essential for tabulation. It was decided that a plus (+) would symbolize completely positive statements, a plus/ minus (+-) would represent those which were mixed and/or neutral, and a

minus (-) would indicate completely negative responses.

Of those answering this question in 1983, 87.9 percent had totally positive reactions; 8.6 percent expressed mixed or neutral feelings; only 3.5 percent could find nothing good. These figures as compared with the 1976/77 study are presented below:

	1983		1976/77	
	number	percent	number	percent
Positive	509	(87.9%)	935	(85.5%)
Mixed/neutral	50	(8.6%)	138	(12.6%)
Negative	20	(3.5%)	20	(1.8%)
Total Responses	579	(100%)	1093	(99.9%)
No responses given	62		69	

The following words were used repeatedly in the positive responses: cooperative, friendly, courteous, nice, helpful, polite, efficient, competent, knowledgeable, excellent, patient, cordial, informed, and professional. Other responses which were unique in their praise are quoted below:

> Helpful, knowledgeable, just an all-around nice bunch
>
> Polite in their mannerisms and professional in their work, service with a smile
>
> Extremely courteous and very helpful. I'm grateful to have such splendid people around whenever I visit the library
>
> Very well informed about their individual departments

Very welcoming, nice, & they really know their stuff

Approachable, friendly, helpful, efficient, and acquainted with his/her area of responsibility

They seem to want to help you very much and they take pride in their work. I appreciate and respect that. Keep up the hard work

The committee judged some reactions to be neutral in meaning (neither good nor bad) and as such placed them in the plus/minus category. The following descriptive words are included in that category: satisfactory, o.k., sufficient, acceptable, average, fairly helpful, all right, and pretty good. The plus/minus category was also used to code those responses which registered both positive and negative qualities. The following quotations are representative:

They seem as if they really would like to help you, but some don't help quite enough

Adequate, if small

Younger members are friendlier than the older ladies at most times

Helpful ... at times

Very helpful when asked for advice or information. On the other hand, they sometimes look so serious that one doesn't decide whether asking them for help or keeping one self quiet (sic)

Pretty nice

Pleasant and helpful. However, there have been times when specific unique guidance, advice, or assistance was not available because the <u>person</u> (singular) who is knowledgeable in that area was not available when needed

Alive and well

Never used them

Only 20 of the 579 responses were totally negative. Some of these responses as directly quoted here include:

Could be better

The workers here exercise a poor way of doing their jobs

Smug

Bored

Not very helpful

Slightly 'cold shoulder' people. Here is the material, but you find it, don't bother me

Above my intellectual level, and they let you know it, too

QUESTION 7: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The last question asked for suggestions for improving the library. Of the students who responded to the user survey, 376 or 58.5 percent either had no response or recommended no change.

	1983		1976/1977	
No response/no suggestion	376	(58.5%)	793	(68.2%)
Number responding	267	(41.5%)	369	(31.8%)
Number of suggestions	348		425	

One hundred sixty-three responses were catergorized as "no suggestions." Within this category, 131 responses were either "no", "not really", or "none." Thirty-two respondents made very positive statements about the library but offered no suggestions. A sample of these remarks is included below:

The service is excellent

Don't change

Overall - I'm very satisfied with the services offered by MSU library

It's a great place already, if you (sic) staff is tops, then how can you improve it

The actual suggestions can be broken down into four categories: (1) building and physical comfort, (2) collection, (3) staff and, (4) miscellaneous. These results are summarized below:

	1983		1976/1977	
Building and physical comfort	173	26.9%	150	12.9%
Collection	114	17.7%	145	12.5%
Staff	37	5.8%	45	3.9%
Miscellaneous	24	3.7%	85	7.3%

Under building and physical comfort, the suggestions may be broken down into several categories. The copy machines are a constant source of complaint. Either there are not enough or the quality of those in use needs to be improved. Six percent of the suggestions were either for more or better quality copy machines. The temperature of Frazar Library is never quite right. It is either too hot or too cold. Eight percent of the suggestions were for better regulation of the building's temperature.

McNeese is the fastest growing university in Louisiana. As it continues its unprecedented growth, Frazar Library tries to keep pace with increased student needs and expectations. An area of increased need is in the number and type of study areas. Just under three percent of the suggestions expressed the need for more group study areas and designated smoking areas within the library. There has been a significant increase in the number of complaints about the noise in the stacks between the

1976/77 survey and the 1983 survey. Over eleven percent of the suggestions were for increased staff in the library addition to control the noise level. Noise seems to be a greater problem in the evenings when the library has fewer staff than during the day. Suggestions for longer hours came from over eight percent of the respondents. This was also suggested in the previous survey. In the interim, the hours have been extended. Some suggested that the library remain open twenty-four hours a day, sever days a week. Many of the suggestions were for uniform hours every day of the week. Nearly ten percent of the building and physical comfort suggestions fell into a miscellaneous category. These suggestions included music in the library, smoking and food in the library, and better signage.

Suggestions relating to the collection fell into broad categories. Several suggestions were for specific titles of monographs and serials. The overall feeling of individuals who responded in this section was that the collection needed to be improved and enlarged. Suggestions in the area of other formats (microforms) and reclassification were seemingly the result of confusion on the part of the respondents. Individuals did not understand how to use other formats or the purpose of the reclassification. This resulted in suggestions such as "go back to Dewey." Interlibrary Loan suggestions were for a decrease in copy charges.

Suggestions about full-time staff related to the need for more librarians. Several suggestions revealed frustration in having to wait for assistance while personnel were occupied with other patrons. Suggestions concerning the janitorial staff comprised 2.3 percent of the responses. The suggestions asked

that the custodians be quieter when cleaning major study areas during the day.

The most significant miscellaneous suggestion was the need for more library instruction. Nearly all of the miscellaneous suggestions in the 1983 survey were for a type of library training either through a course on how to use the library or a training manual. A comparison of suggestions is included below:

	1983		1976/1977	
Building & Physical Comfort				
General suggestions	2	0.5%	--	---
Clocks	3	0.8%	30	7.1%
Copy machine	21	6.0%	11	2.6%
Temperature	28	8.0%	16	3.8%
Study area	10	2.9%	12	2.8%
Noise	39	11.2%	27	6.4%
Hours	30	8.6%	53	12.5%
Typewriters	6	1.7%	5*	1.2%*
Miscellaneous	34	9.8%	17*	4.0%*
Collection				
General suggestions	15	4.3%	--	---
Serials	36	10.3%	73	17.2%
Monographs	43	12.4%	69	16.2%
Documents	1	0.3%	3	0.7%
Other formats	5	1.4%	--	---
Inter library loan	4	1.1%	*	*
**Reclassification	10	2.9%	--	---
Staff				
General suggestions	9	2.6%	--	---

Full-time	17	4.9%	--	10.6%
Student Workers	3	0.9%	--	---
Janitorial staff	8	2.3%	2	0.5%
Miscellaneous	24	6.9%	85	20.0%

* included in the miscellaneous statistics in 1976/1977

** begun September 1980

The librarians at Frazar Memorial Library are dedicated to the philosophy of service to the students, faculty, and staff of McNeese State University. After the 1976/77 survey, numerous changes in library operations were made to comply with user needs. Serious consideration will be given to suggestions for improvements reflected in the 1983 user survey. For example, we plan to study the idea of providing more library instruction for users. In the past, students have been instructed individually upon request or have come to the library as part of a class for group instruction. We hope to develop more structured means of providing library orientation to students. Suggestions for building and physical comfort and collection development will also be studied to see what changes may be warranted and are feasible.

Future user surveys will be conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of changes made as a result of this survey and to again measure user satisfaction.

Submitted by The User Survey Committee

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July 12, 1984

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SURVEY OF LIBRARY USE

We need your cooperation in obtaining information about the daily use made of the library, and your successes and failures in using it. Your answers will help us to improve library services. Please give thoughtful attention to answering the questions below, and place your reply in the box at the Turnstile when you leave the library. THANK YOU!

1. Your status (check one)

   a. Freshman ___
   b. Sophomore ___
   c. Junior ___
   d. Senior ___
   e. Graduate student ___
   f. Faculty member ___
   g. Staff(other than library) ___
   h. Other(specify) _____

2. Your major field _____

3. Reasons for coming to the library THIS trip (check all those applicable)

   a. To return, check out, or renew books ___
   b. To use materials reserved by a faculty member ___
   c. To do assigned reading in library materials other than reserve items ___
   d. To look up material for a paper, report, thesis, etc. ___
   e. To do research for a proposed publication ___
   f. For general reading not assigned in class (include recreational reading)
      Books ___
      Magazines ___
      Newspapers ___
   g. To study your own books ___
   h. To use typing facilities ___
   i. To use listening booths ___
   j. Other reasons (specify) _____

4. If you were looking for a specific publication, did you find it?
   Yes ___ No ___ If your answer is No, please check below:
   In bindery ___
   Missing ___
   Mutilated ___
   Checked out ___
   Library does not have ___

5. Did you ask for assistance from a staff member?
   Yes ___ No ___ If "yes", was the assistance adequate for your needs? _____

6. Please complete this statement in any way you wish.
   "Generally, I find the library staff to be

7. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the library service?

NOTE: Basic questionnaire from: Lyle. Administration of the College Library. 1974.